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Looney Bill Homer Sat in a corner Smoking "Bonehead's Joy:" He shoved in his mitt To get a fresh bit And pulled out -a bunch of loose.

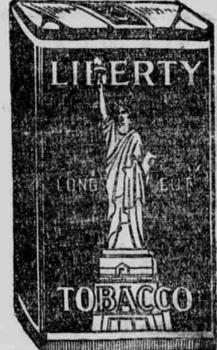
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The Strange Case Of Mary Page

Continued from Monday's Banner

Under the careless words there was a sudden deeper note of sincerity, and the moment she was on the stand she turned to the judge and said:

"I don't know what I am supposed to do, your Honor, but I want to tell you right here, that Mary Page is the best and the bravest and the truest girl in the whole wide world." For the first time the judge smiled:

then he leaned forward and said kindly: "The Court appreciates your admira-

tion for the prisoner, but you must confine your remarks, while on the stand, to the answers to questions which will be asked you." "Oh. yes, I was told that." she answered readity. "But I forgot," Then

turning to Langdon she added cheerily,

"Fire away, Mr. Langdon, I'm all A little gust of laughter rippled through the court. Then Langdon, coming close to the witness stand, said

"Miss Barton, you know the defend-

ant, Mary Page, do you?" "Why, of course I do, you goat!" she answered with a bubbling laugh that found an echo in the room. But Langdon frowned, and his voice was more barsh as he said. "Please answer yes, or no, and remember that if you want to aid Miss Page, you must make your answers short and to the point. Now will you please tell the court just when and how you first met Miss

"It was some years ago, and she and her mother came to our apartment with a note from Cousin Alice Cowes, who lived in New Town. Cousin Alice had sent them to us because she knew we had an extra room we wanted to rent, and she thought that I could help

Mary land a job." "What sort of-er-position" "In the merry-merry-that is, on the stage. I'd been across the foots myself for a couple of seasons and Cousin Alice said Mary wanted to become an actress and thought I could show her how to make the rounds. It's a tough proposition getting a job in New York | not?"

with no friends and no pull." "Will you tell the court, please, Miss Barton, about the first position secured by Miss Page and of the events that

Mary hit the big town L had a date ! with Webster, the real boss of the musical comedies. Of course he isn't the sort that you'd want to send your little sister from the country to see, but too much hedging don't go in the show business worth a whoop. You've got to trust to a sharp tongue and a hat-pin till you show them where they get off, and once they're wise, they treat you All choice, pure Ken- all right. Webster was like that, but if he promises you a part he plays fair. thirty in the morning, and we were all

> "I had an appointment with the old of his 'romantic leads'-you could hear them clear out to the front hall-and it was a long time before I could perguade his little cerberus to go in and tell him I was waiting. At any rate. he came out at last blowing blasts of red fire after the actor-and then he saw Mary. Talk about lions and lambs! Why, he parred when he saw her, and he was so sweet to me I almost got a leading lady's contract out of him before he weke up, and began to ask me questions about Mary. Then he tried o kiss her and I put an inch or so of my hat pin in his arm just above the elbow. Mary and I beat it while the going was good, and Mary was so upset we decided to go right home instead of calling on any of the other

managers. That was how we happened to run into Jim Poliock."

"Where did you meet Mr. Pollock?" "Of he was on the job at the apartment when we got home. Playing the humble but persistent swain-wanted to lay his fortune at her feet and give her a life of gilded ease. He pleaded all that sort of soft-music stuff, and told her she didn't realize how cruel the world was to a girl (men always say that) and how she would suffer to see her mother growing old and lack ing the comforts she could not earn for her. Then he pulls out his wallet and taps it, saying, 'All that I have is yours. Mary, even if you don't marry me.' Business of soft music!"

"Were you in the room while this

was going on?" "No," she answered, winning a gale of laughter from the court-room; "but you can't brush your teeth in a New York apartment without the people in the next door flat hearing you, and everything that Mary said or Jim Pollock said, might as well have been shouted through a megaphone."

"Did Miss Page seem touched by Mr. Pollock's offer?" said Langdon, repress ing a smile with difficulty.

"No, she stood up to him spunkily and told him flat where he got off. 'I'm going to get work,' she said, 'but even if I didn't my mother and I would never accept any help from you. I have only one thing to ask, and that is that you leave here at once and do not come again.' He came out in the hall where I had the door all nicely opened for him. I told him sweetly that I'd opened it for him to get out, but I'd be shot before it ever opened to let him in again. I ran back to the sittingroom, to find Mary in a dead faint. It was such a long time before she came round, and then she war so dazed and terrified that we were all scared to death, and I swore a solenm vow then and there that I'd be the busiest little can take its place,

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A. E. LERCHE "If you ever get the blues," he said,

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W. L. GOKAY

stage mother and chaperon and advice giver to Mary that any girl ever had." Her voice suddenly trembled, and the quick tears filled her eyes as, turning to Mary, she cried eagerly:

"And, Mary, I've kept my word, Inven't I? Haven't I?" Mary nodded, smiling through her own tears, and the spectators who throughout the breezy testimony of the young actress had been in gales of laughter, suddenly sobered. They saw the brave heart under the butterfly exterior, and realized the wisdom and the goodness behind the vulgar words.

Langdon, seeing the judge frown at this shattering of legal precedent, ask ed his next question quickly.

"You and Miss Page did secure posi tions in the same company, did you

"Oh, yes, in 'The Blue Feather,' Mary took to it like a duck to water, and made a hit with the stage manager before he'd got through calling the rest of us all the names in his vocab-"Well, it just happened that the day plary. So when it came to one bit where the fat tenor had to choose a girl out of the choras to sing an encore with him, Mary got the chance, and made good, too. But that was after-

> "Well, suppose you tell us what occurred on the day 'The Blue Feather'

"Oh, the day was the same as any other opening day. We'd rehearsed half the night and started in at eightso I never was affeald to buck his of- tired to death and wished we were fice-boy even on a busy day. So off dead. It's always like that a few hours before the overture on an opening night, so Mary and I were mighty man, but he was scrapping with one | glad to slip out home and rest an hour before going back to make up. We didn't dare stay long, though, for being late is the worst sin in the box at a show-shop, so it was round about sev en when we got on our lids and were ready to beat it back. Just when we were leaving, though, mother came running in and said, 'Oh, Mary, Philip Langdon is here and he wants to see you just a miunte before you leave." At that Mary lights all the lamps in her eyes, and went into the sitting room with me a close second.

"Mr. Langdon was there talking to Mrs. Page and when we came in she called out, 'Mary, Philip has given up his practice in New Town and has come here to live.' At that he came

over and took Mary's hand in both of his and said, 'Please be glad, Mary. 1 heard that Pollock had gone into business here and I worried so about you I felt I had to come. Let me be your friend and protector, even if I can't be anything more, won't you, Mary? 'Oh, but you oughtn't to give up your practice, Phil.' she said, beginning, just like a woman, to kick against the thing that pleased her most. 'Youyou-may not like It here.' But he laughed at that, and they began to talk so much that I got worried and butted in by reminding Mary that she was an actress now and had to hustle

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to get Hood's, for no other medicine

the late comers. Mr. Langdon was to go with mother and Mrs. Page, and I soon spotted them up in the baleony, for the management doesn't hand ou boxes for the families of its front row of the chorus, but in one of the boxes did see a familiar face-that of Pol lock. He was all getten up in so and fish, but he was alone, and I could see that he was taking Mary all in and then some. Mary had told me lot about him, and the piker way he'd acted, and she'd also told me a lot about Mr. Langdon, so I decided that I wouldn't put her wise to the fact that Pollock was there, but would let her play to the balcony, which she did. She was so pretty and so happy that she got a silly song over big, and even the tenor had the decency to make her go on and take a curtain with him Everybody just made a fuss over her till Mary fairly cried, she was so happy. And the part that seemed to please her most was that she had seen Langdon applauding his hands off up

"Did you join your mother and Mrs. Page after the show?" interrupted

Langdon warningly. "That was the big idea," she said. "But it hit the rocks, for when Mary and I hustled into our glad rags and started for the door we bumped squarely into the stage manager and Mr. Pollock-the latter all done up to kill, even to a top hat. 'Oh, Miss Page.' sings out Ecky (that's the manager) here's a gentleman from your hom-

(To be Continued)



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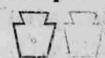
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